

PROTECTION TO BRITISH
INDUSTRY.



S P E E C H

OF

LORD GEORGE BENTINCK,

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1846.

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1846.

SPEECH

OF

LORD GEORGE BENTINCK,

February 27th, 1846.

Lord G. BENTINCK then rose—Lord Palmerston and Mr. Wakley, who rose at the same time, having given way—and spoke as follows :—Sir, I can assure the House that, in asking for its patience, while I endeavour to answer some of the arguments which have been advanced on the other side, there is no man within its walls who feels so much as I do my unworthiness to ask for its indulgence. (Cheers.) I have had the honour of a seat in this House in eight Parliaments, but have never yet once ventured to trespass upon its time on any subject of great debate. (Hear.) We oppose your leaving the chair, Sir, not only because we object to the great change that is proposed to be made in reference to the agricultural interest, but because we object in principle to the entire measure upon the details of which it is proposed that we should go into committee. (Cheers.) We see in that measure a proposition effecting a change in regard to no fewer than eleven hundred articles—(Hear, hear)—a great commercial revolution, which we are of opinion that the circumstances of the country do not by any means require. (Cheers.) Sir, it is not only that we object to the removal of protection from the agricultural interest, but we object, also, to the removal of protection from the shipping interest, from the silk trade, and from all the other interests connected with domestic industry which are injuriously affected by the proposed measure. (Hear, hear.) My Right Hon. Friend the Secretary at War (Mr. S. Herbert) has called upon the agricultural interest to submit to this great change now, whilst, in his opinion, it can be accepted with honour, and before it is extorted from us by force, coupled with loss of honour, loss of character, loss of influence, and loss of station, in the country. (Hear, hear.) Sir, I wish to God I thought that this change could be carried by this House of Commons with honour, and without loss of character, loss of influence with, and loss of station in, the country. (Loud cheers.) Vicious as I think this measure, and injurious as I consider it is to all the great interests of this country, I think I should feel that it was deprived of half its vice if it could be carried by this House without loss of honour, damage to reputation, and forfeiture of public character, to a vast many Gentlemen who are now seated within its walls. (Great cheering.) It is but candid to Gentlemen opposite to state that their honour is not concerned, for they are the consistent advocates of Free-trade principles, and came to this House pledged to maintain those principles on which they avowedly solicited the suffrages of their constituents, and are now with honesty and fidelity

maintaining. (Hear.) But when we are told by Hon. Gentlemen, and more especially the Hon. Gentleman the Secretary of the Treasury, that this is not a Protection Parliament, I am at a loss to understand upon what principles they and he ground their assertion. Why, was not the subject of free trade in corn discussed over and over again prior to the dissolution of 1841? Sir, may I not ask if it were not emphatically upon the question whether or not we were to have a fixed duty of 8s a quarter, or whether we were to have a higher protection, that her Majesty appealed to the people in the year 1841? (Loud cries of "Hear, hear," from the agricultural benches.) Sir, upon this subject there can be no mistake. (Hear, hear.) It was not only the Right Hon. Baronet now at the head of the Government, but then the leader of the Opposition, who challenged his opponents, and made the accusation against them that they were going to dissolve the Parliament upon the cry of "Cheap bread," but the Secretary of State for the Home Department followed in the same wake, and not only charged the Government with the intention to dissolve, but in making the accusation charged them with the malice of the devil himself. ("Hear," and laughter.) Nay, he even charged them with something more than the malice of the devil himself, for apostrophising the speech of Mr. Tierney addressed to Mr. Canning in 1807, in which he charged the Government of that day with something more than the malice of the devil himself, for devising a scheme such as a dissolution of Parliament upon a cry of "The Church in danger." My Right Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department, upon being ironically cheered by the Noble Lord the Member for London (Lord John Russell), exclaimed, "Well, you cheer that; but let me ask is a cry of "The Church in danger" half so maddening, half so exciting to the feelings of the people, as the cry of "Cheap bread" when raised from the Treasury bench?" (Loud cheers from the Protectionists.) I should like to know what cry has been raised now from the Treasury bench? (Hear, hear.) Have we not had the cry of "Cheap bread" from the Treasury bench? Have we not heard from my Right Hon. Friend that this is a landlord's question, and that he for one will no longer consent to eke out his rents from the sufferings of the poor? (Hear.) But, to return to 1841, what was the course of proceeding at that time? The Noble Lord at the head of the Government of that day found himself defeated by a vote of no confidence, by a majority of 312 to 311, and then the Noble Lord advised her Majesty to dissolve the Parliament. But what was the language adopted by her Majesty in the speech from the throne when proroguing the Parliament preparatory to the dissolution in 1841? Her Majesty appealed to the sense of the people in these words, "On a full consideration of the present state of public affairs, I have come to the determination of proroguing Parliament, with a view to its immediate dissolution. The paramount importance of the trade and industry of the country, and my anxiety that the exigencies of the public service should be provided for in the manner least burdensome to the community, have induced me to resort to the means which the constitution has entrusted to me, of ascertaining the sense of my people upon matters which so deeply concern their welfare." (Hear, hear.) After that declaration from the throne, I cannot help

saying that every Member who was returned to Parliament at the general election which ensued was returned pledged by the speech from the throne. (Cries of "No, no," and "Hear, hear.") I appeal to the sense of this House—I appeal to the sense of the country—whether, after that speech, every Member who occupied a seat in this House must not be considered as having been returned pledged to either one course or the other? (No, no, and Hear, hear.) Well, Sir, though I hear a few cries of "No, no," that is my view of the matter, and as it appears to me it is the only correct view of the matter; and being of this opinion, I must repeat that in my opinion no Member of the old majority of this House can give his consent to this measure, as proposed by her Majesty's Ministers for the repeal of the Corn Laws, without dishonour. ("Hear, hear, hear," and loud cheers from the agricultural Members.) But, Sir, we are told that there has been some change of circumstances, and that the experience of the last three years has proved that the recent commercial policy of the Right Hon. Baronet has been attended with the happiest results, and that the policy pursued during the last thirty years has been quite erroneous. Sir, the country will not be satisfied with three years' experience of any system. Three years' experience, I contend, is not sufficiently extensive to afford a proper criterion by which to decide the failure or success of any description of policy whatsoever. (Hear, hear.) The Right Hon. Baronet has most especially founded his belief in doctrines contrary to those which he has heretofore uniformly maintained, on the assumption that the price of corn will not be much reduced, and has argued that in the case of cattle and other commodities included in his previous tariff, no diminution of price has resulted as a consequence of the relaxation of protective duties. He is also sanguine of success, because of the results upon the silk trade, and has challenged the House to instance any one single example of a case in which the reduction of duty had not proved equally beneficial to the consumer and the producer. ("Hear, hear," from the free trade benches.) I accept his challenge. I will meet my Right Hon. Friend in his challenge in regard to silk, and I am also ready to encounter him as well as my Hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield on the article of wool. (Hear, hear.) My Hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Ward) distinctly challenged my Hon. Friend the Member for Somerset (Mr. Miles) on the article of wool, but my Hon. Friend the Member for Somerset forgot to answer him, but I will do so for him; and I am also prepared to accept the challenge of the Right Hon. Baronet at the head of the Government in the matter of timber, and engage to shew him the injurious effects of free trade in timber upon the prices of English oak, whilst I am at the same time prepared to demonstrate the evil consequences to the carrying trade of Great Britain, which have already resulted from the past measures, and must still more result from the proposed measures yet further reducing the differential duties between foreign and colonial timber. There is also another article, which was mentioned the other night by the Hon. Member for Birmingham (Mr. Muntz)—I allude to spelter. The Right Hon. Member for Stamford attempted to answer the Hon. Member for Birmingham when he asserted that *the spelter manufacture had been destroyed* by the reduction of the protective duties, but he had

utterly failed to overthrow his statements. The Hon. Member for Birmingham stood up as a witness, and as he is, I believe, in his character of a hardware manufacturer the consumer of a seventh part of all the spelter that is used in Great Britain; his evidence ought to be most valuable in this House. He has told us that, although, perhaps, his branch of trade may have been assisted by the relaxation of prohibitory duties, the result of that relaxation has been to utterly annihilate every single concern for the raising and manufacture of zinc in its raw state. (Hear, hear.) I think the Hon. Member said there was one exception, and that that was in a case where the lessee of the spelter mine had had the good fortune to hold the lease of a coal mine in conjunction with the spelter concern at a very low rent, but with that solitary exception the result of Free Trade as applied to spelter has been to utterly annihilate it. This statement remains up to the present hour, and I take it will continue to remain uncontroverted and uncontrovertible. (Hear, hear.) I now, Sir, approach the subject of wool. Let us see, then, whether the experience of the past three years, with respect to that commodity, has been such as to afford a valid argument, why the duty on corn should be repealed? (Hear, hear.) [At this stage of the Noble Lord's address the House became densely crowded in every part, and owing to repeated cries of "Adjourn," and "Divide," and the noise which was created by Hon. Members continually moving about, the Noble Lord, who spoke in an exceedingly low tone of voice, was on frequent occasions almost totally inaudible in the reporter's gallery.] Sir, this "wool" argument is a most convenient weapon in the hands of the Right Hon. Baronet. In 1846 the results of a free trade in wool afforded my Right Hon. Friend a most irresistible argument to his mind in favour of free trade in corn; the happy results which he sees in 1846, of the removal of one penny per lb. duty on foreign wool in 1842, convince him of the indubitable policy of an entire removal of all Protection to home-grown corn and to the landed interests of the British empire. But, Sir, I well remember my Right Hon. Friend in a speech which, from its surpassing ability, will never be forgotten, triumphantly appealed in 1839, not to 3, but to 20 years' experience, of the operation of a protecting duty on wool, as the best possible reason why we should maintain high duties on corn. The Hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield, when he challenged my Hon. Friend below me (Mr. Miles) on this subject, facetiously observed that the agricultural interests were wholly incapable of taking care of themselves; that, in fact, you could not do them so great an unkindness, indeed, you could not inflict so great a cruelty upon them as to indulge them in their taste and passion for Protective legislation; and referring to the year 1825, he said that in one of these fits of foolishness they had resisted, tooth and nail, the friendly efforts of the late Mr. Huskisson to remove the sixpenny protecting duty on foreign wool, which was their bane. Happily, however, for these poor misguided, benighted agriculturists, who were so blind to their own interests, Mr. Huskisson was too strong for them, and, in spite of them, succeeded in taking off the duty; "and what," triumphantly exclaimed my Hon. Friend, "was the result?" Answering his own inquiry, he said, "*the result was, that the price of English wool instantly rose higher, and*

for the next five years, continued higher than it was ever known before." Undoubtedly, Sir, this was a wonderful statement, if true; but let us first examine into the matter-of-fact—and here I will appeal to an authority which will not, at least, be doubted on the Treasury Bench—I appeal to the authority of Sir Robert Peel in 1839. Sir Robert Peel, in 1839, stated, in his place from the benches opposite, that a duty of sixpence per pound was placed on foreign wool in December, 1819, and that this duty was continued until the 10th or 20th of December, 1824. Well, what does he say was the effect and consequence of this protecting duty of sixpence per pound on foreign wool? He says, the consequence was that the price of wool remained steady and unwavering at 1s. 6d. per lb. for five entire years, that is to say, from 1820 to 1824, both years inclusive. In December, 1824, the protecting duty of 6d. per lb. was reduced to 1d. What happened? Did "English Southdown wool rise higher the next five years than ever was known before," as stated by the Hon. Member for Sheffield? No such thing, Sir; far from rising, it fell from 1s. 6d. per lb. in 1824, to 1s. per lb. in 1825; it remained 1s. per lb. in 1826. In 1827, there was a still further fall to 9d. per lb. and it remained 9d. per lb. in 1828, and 9d. per lb. in 1829. The House and the country, therefore, will see that so far from the price of English Southdown wool having been enhanced, as stated by the Hon. Member for Sheffield, it was greatly reduced, as the natural and direct consequence of the reduction of the protecting duty. (Hear, hear.) Have I not now, then, met the Right Hon. Baronet, who challenged us to instance a case where the reduction of duty had proved disadvantageous either to consumer or producer? (Hear, hear.) Is it not manifest that in the case of wool, at all events, the producer has been materially injured? ("Hear, hear," and cheers from the Ministerial benches.) I think I ought to mention at the same time, that during these five years, when the duty of 6d. was imposed, it did not interfere with the prosperity of the import trade, for I find, on looking to the returns, that the imports in wool amounted to 10,000,000lbs. in 1820, and that in 1824 they rose to 22,000,000lbs. This proves that the protective duty of 6d. maintained the price at home, and did not prevent the importation of such additional supply as might be required to supply the wants of the manufacturing interest. I believe the duty on foreign wool imported into this country in 1823 amounted to 375,000*l.*, and in the present state of this country are we to be told that the loss of such a source of revenue is a mean and insignificant consideration? (Hear, hear, hear.) The Right Hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel), when alluding to the subject of wool, went back to 1842, selecting a year of great depression, when he told you the price of wool was down at 11½d. per lb., but that in 1844 and 1845 it rose to 1s. 2d. per lb. He also told you that the importation of foreign wool was only 45,880,000lbs. in 1842, that in 1844 there were 65,079,000lbs. imported; and in ten months of the last year the importation amounted to 65,216,000lbs. (which quantity it appears by the return since laid before the House, has been further increased to upwards of 76,000,000lbs.) and that this increase of importation, and increase of price was "*all in consequence of the reduction of duty.*" If he had gone back to 1836, ten years ago, during the reign of his

rivals, the Whigs, he would have found that the importation was upwards of 64,000,000, and that in 1835 the price of wool was not 1s. 2d. but 1s. 10d.; in 1836, 1s. 8d.; in 1837, 1s. 8d.; in 1838, 1s. 4d.; in 1839, 1s. 3d., a great deal higher than under his much vaunted three years of Free Trade. (Hear, hear.) It is much to be lamented, I think, that the Right Hon. Baronet should have restricted his view to three years only. If he had taken the trouble to refer to the years which I have specified, it is probable he would have arrived at a different conclusion from that at which he has arrived. (Hear, hear.) Having disposed of wool, I will now examine how far my Right Hon. Friend is justified in introducing so mighty a change as regards the landed interest as a repeal of the Corn Laws, upon what he considers the perfectly successful and satisfactory results of a similar experiment in regard to cattle. My Right Hon. Friend reverted to the fears entertained by the agricultural interest in 1842, at his proposal to admit cattle at a low duty, and triumphantly appealed to the results of that measure in proof, not only of the visionary character of the fears of the agriculturalists, but my Right Hon. Friend even went the length of arguing, that the free admission of cattle, sheep, and pigs, had actually improved the prices of meat in England, and in proof of the truth of this argument, he gave these as the contract prices of fresh beef, salt beef, and pork for the navy, in the years 1844 and 1845:—

	1844.	1845.
Fresh Beef	£1 14 9	£2 2 0
Salt Beef	3 18 2	6 8 8
Pork	3 15 10	6 12 0

Arguing that this extraordinary rise in the price of meat was “all in consequence of the reductions in the tariff of 1842.” Now, Sir, whilst I cannot help observing as I pass that those engaged in supplying her Majesty’s navy cannot have been very happy in the markets to which they went in 1845, I must take leave to say that if, instead of restricting his view to 1845, my Right Hon. Friend had only taken a view of the prices of meat for the last seven years, he would have found very different results, and probably have come to very opposite conclusions. Sir, I hold in my hand the contract prices of provisions in the workhouses of a number of unions in various parts of the empire for the last seven years, but, for fear of wearying the house, I will be content to quote one or two only. I will first take a metropolitan parish, St. George’s, Hanover-square; it is a return of the contract prices for the third week in JANUARY in EACH YEAR:—

Contract price of meat.

	Per 8lbs.	
1841—3s. 6d.	} Average of two years previous to the passing of the new Tariff, 3s. 9½d.	
1842—4s. 1d.		
1843—3s. 2d.		
1844—2s. 7½d.	} Average of four years subsequent to the passing of ditto, 2s. 11½d. 2-4ths.	
1845—2s. 11d.		
1846—3s. 2d.		

Thus, instead of an average rise of prices in consequence of the new

Tariff, shewing the average prices of meat to have been nearly 30 per cent. higher during the two years previous to the new Tariff than they have been upon an average of the four years subsequent to it.

The Liverpool workhouse shews similar results :—

Contract price of meat.

Cwt.		
1840—47s. 6d.	}	Average of two years antecedent to the passing of the new Tariff, 47s. 2d. per cwt.
1841—46s. 8d.		
1842—49s. 0d.		
1843—37s. 4d.	}	Average of four years subsequent to ditto, 41s. 0½d.
1844—37s. 3d.		
1845—42s. 11d.		
1846—46s. 8d.		

This is the statement of the contract prices of meat for the last quarters in each year at the Union Workhouse in the Borough of King's Lynn, which I myself represent :—

Beef per stone		
1840—6s. 6d.	}	Average, 6s. 9d. antecedent to the new Tariff.
1841—7s. 0d.		
1842—6s. 6d.	}	Average, subsequent to the new new Tariff, 5s. 11½d.
1843—5s. 3d.		
1844—5s. 6d.		
1845—6s. 0d.		

But, Sir, whilst I thus state that the Right Hon. Gentleman at the head of her Majesty's Government if not absolutely wrong in his facts has at least given a false colouring to the effects of his Tariff, by selecting particular years to suit his purpose, let me not be misunderstood as meaning to convey to this House that the importation of such an insignificant quantity of cattle as 24,000, can have affected the prices of cattle either for good or evil. It must be clear to every one that as regards the importation of cattle, the new Tariff has been entirely inoperative. And recollecting as I do how strenuously my Right Hon. Friends on the Treasury Bench, previously to the introduction of that measure urged upon their then Agricultural Friends that this would be the case, —assuring us there were no foreign cattle to come, and the sole object was to strengthen the hands of the agricultural interest as regarded more essential and more effectual protections, by removing from them the odium of a nominal protection, which, practically, was no protection at all, it is hardly ingenuous in my Right Hon. Friend to turn round upon the agricultural interest and say, "See how I have raised the price of meat in 1845 by my Tariff of 1842, and the consequent introduction of 24,000 head of foreign cattle." My Right Hon. Friend knows full well that, as regards cattle, his Tariff of 1842 has been, virtually, as he intended it to be, wholly inoperative. Convinced by my Right Hon. Friends, in 1842, that such would be the case, I gave my cordial support to that measure. The Noble Lord then proceeded to review the operation of the new Tariff on the articles of meat, live stock, and silk, and amid repeated cries of "Adjourn," "Divide," and other symptoms of impatience, which rendered him almost inaudible, read various state-

ments, and referred to various returns, with a view to show that the effect of the relaxation as regarded these articles had not been at all as beneficial as the advocates of Free Trade contended. Sir, I will now meet the challenge of her Majesty's Ministers, and especially that of my Right Hon. Friend at the head of the Government, in regard to silk. The silk trade has been made the great battle horse of the Ministry, and the great success, as alleged, of the Free Trade in silk has been put forth with great parade, as an unanswerable argument why Free Trade in corn cannot fail to benefit all classes of her Majesty's subjects, producers as well as consumers. Sir, I undertake to show that Free Trade in silk has proved a signal failure. But before I go into the details of the silk question, I must explain to the House that there are three descriptions of silk, first there is "*raw silk*," varying in value from 14s. to 20s. per lb., and then there is "*thrown silk*," varying in value from 20s. to 28s. per lb.; and lastly, there are "*knubs and husks*," which mean the "scales, excrements, and offals of the silkworm," worth no more than from 6d. to 10d. per lb., and which no more resemble and no more compare with raw silk than the chaff or straw can compare with the grain of wheat, or than the offals of cattle resemble beef. To work up 2,000lbs. weights of "*knubs and husks*" would occupy 60 or 70 persons no longer time than it would occupy 700 or 800 persons to work up and manufacture the same weight of raw or thrown silk, that is, one week. It will be clear, therefore, to the House and to the country, that to mix up "*raw silk*," "*thrown silk*," and "*knubs and husks*," in one common mass, would be to play off a complete delusion upon the House and upon the country; yet such, Sir, was the course adopted by my Right Hon. Friend the First Minister of the Crown, and such was also the course pursued by the Right Hon. Gentleman the Vice-President of the Board of Trade. This was the statement of the Right Hon. Gentleman the First Minister of the Crown. After advertng to the hard names applied to Mr. Huskisson some twenty years ago by the Friends of the Silk Weavers, the Right Hon. Baronet went on the other night to ask, what was the result of Mr. Huskisson's measures? Were hundreds of thousands of silk manufacturers thrown out of employment? (asked the Right Hon. Gentleman.) Have the poor rates been burdened for their subsistence? Have we been unable to compete with foreigners? In the decennial period ending in 1823, the quantity of silk entered for home consumption was 19,409,023lb.; for the ten years ending 1833, 39,681,248lb., immediately after the reduction of the duty; for the ten years ending 1843, 52,007,118lb. The aggregate annual consumption of the successive decennial periods was 1,940,000lb. for the 10 years ending 1823; 3,968,124lb. for the 10 years ending 1833; 5,200,711lb. for the 10 years ending 1843, a further reduction of duty having taken place in 1842; whereas now the consumption, which for the 10 years ending in 1823 was 1,940,902lb., is now (for the *single year* 1844) 6,208,028lb. Which is the true philanthropist? Is it the man who cries out against the admission of French papers? Was it the man who cried out against the admission of French silks? Or, was it the Minister who said "Good God! don't suppose I do not sympathise with distress. Don't load me with the reproach of causing ruin

to thousands when I am endeavouring to benefit them!" *I have seen Spitalfields at the point of starvation; let me trace the causes of such calamities, and try whether by bringing in the free air of competition, I cannot diminish or remove the sources of such calamities.* Sir, with the leave and indulgence of the House, I will tell you how all this was, but I must commence by explaining to the House that prior to the 25th of March, 1824, whilst there was either absolute prohibition, or else duties practically amounting to prohibition, upon all silken articles of foreign manufacture, there existed, at the same time, high revenue duties upon the importation of thrown and upon the importation of raw silk, as I shall show you, annually bringing in a large harvest of revenue to the Exchequer. The duties on raw silk until the 25th March, 1824, were 5s. 6d. per lb.; these duties were then reduced to 3d. per lb., but were finally reduced on the 5th July, 1826, to 1d. per lb. In like manner, the duties on thrown silk, which up to the 25th of March, 1825, were 14s. 8d. per lb., were reduced on that day to 7s. 6d. per lb.; on the 15th of November in the same year to 5s. per lb. Further reductions took place in July, 1829, whereby thrown silks were classed according to value, singles paying 1s. 6d., trams 2s., and organzines 3s. 6d.; and finally in 1842, all were charged alike, 1s. and three-fifths of a penny per lb. Having thus, I fear, at too great length explained the exact history and position of the silk trade, I will now proceed to contrast the progress of the silk trade in its protected state previous to 1824, with its progress subsequent to 1824, "*when breathing the free air of competition.*" Sir, that the accuracy of my statement may be above dispute, I have selected my data as regards the period of Protection, from the tables of the late Mr. Deacon Hume, and I have taken three triennial periods, commencing with 1815 and concluding with the conclusion of the protected trade in 1823, the last triennial period being six years in advance of the first. This then is the state of the trade whilst fostered and cherished by high protecting duties:—

UNDER PROTECTION.

Raw silk, worth 14s. to 20s. per lb., 1815, 1816, 1817—average, 1,095,000lbs.; 1818, 1819, 1820—average, 1,504,000lbs.; 1821, 1822, 1823—average, 1,970,000lbs.; increase as compared with triennial period 1815-16-17, 90 per cent.

Home Consumption—Thrown silk, worth 20s. to 28s. per lb., 1815, 1816, 1817—average, 293,000lbs.; 1818, 1819, 1820—average, 340,000lbs.; 1821, 1822, 1823—average, 355,000lbs.; increase as compared with triennial period 1815-16-17, 23 per cent.

Knubs and husks, viz. the scales, nests, excrements and offals of the silkworm, worth from 6d. to 10d. per lb., 1815, 1816, 1817—average, 27,062lbs.; 1818, 1819, 1820—average, 84,984lbs.; 1821, 1822, 1823—average, 74,110lbs.; increase as compared with triennial period 1815-16-17, 170 per cent.

Duty received on foreign silk and silk manufactures, 1815, 1816, 1817—average, 466,000l.; 1818, 1819, 1820—average, 620,000l.; 1821, 1822, 1823—average, 754,000l.; increase as compared with triennial period 1815-16-17, 64 per cent.

Showing, under Protection, a steady progress of the silk trade to the

amount of 90 per cent. in the home consumption of raw silk ; 23 per cent. in respect of thrown silk ; of 170 per cent. in knubs and husks ; and *last*, but not least, of 64 per cent. in the amount of revenue paid into the public Exchequer. Now, Sir, let us contrast this picture with that of the silk trade under Free Trade. And here I beg leave to state that I am obliged to take not a triennial period six years in advance, but a triennial average nine years in advance of the last triennial period under the system of high Protection. The House, therefore, will see that the comparison is highly advantageous to the argument of her Majesty's Ministers, and to the same extent disadvantageous to my argument ; but I shall show the House that the silk trade under Protection can spare even so great a disadvantage in the comparison. The reason I cannot take, as in fairness to my own argument I ought to take, the triennial period 1827, 1828, and 1829, is, that during the first five years of the Free Trade experiment, "KNUBS AND HUSKS" were mixed up in one common mass with "Raw Silk ;" so it is practically impossible to come to any just or sound conclusion as to the progress of the silk trade during those years. I shall take, therefore, the first triennial period free from this objection. I shall now give the statement :—

Raw Silk.—1830, 1831, 1832, average 3,403,082, increase in nine years 72 per cent. ; 1842, 1843, 1844, average 3,869,328lbs., increase in 21 years 100 per cent.

Thrown Silk.—1830, 1831, 1832, 426,902lbs., increase in nine years 19 per cent. ; 1842, 1843, 1844, 394,958lbs., increase in 21 years 10½ per cent.

Knubs and Husks.—1830, 1831, 1832, 835,985lbs., increase in nine years 730 per cent. ; 1842, 1843, 1844, 1,548,064lbs., increase in 21 years 2000 per cent.

Duty received on Foreign Silk and Silk Manufactures.—1830, 1831, 1832, 210,973*l.*, revenue sacrificed, 543,027*l.* ; 1842, 1843, 1844, 285,768*l.*—absolute loss and sacrifice of revenue, 468,232*l.*

The result being that whilst under a highly protected trade the home consumption of raw silk advanced at the rate of 90 per cent. in six years ; and that of thrown silk 23 per cent. in the same period, whilst the public revenue increased at the rate of 64 per cent. Under the blasting effects of Free Trade the progress of the silk trade fell down to an increase of only 72 per cent. in nine years, and to no more than 100 per cent. in 21 years as regards the home consumption of the raw silk, whilst in thrown silk the home consumption, which in the first nine years of Free Trade had increased 19 per cent. as compared with 23 per cent. in the six years under Protection, actually fell down to an increase of only 10½ per cent. upon the whole period of 21 years ; whilst as regards revenue, instead of an increase of 64 per cent. in six years, under Protection, an absolute loss of no less than 468,232*l.* per annum had to be submitted to by the Exchequer, a great portion of which unquestionably would have been extracted from the industry, and from the pockets of Italians and Frenchmen. Lastly, as regards the Silk Trade, I come to the most important and painful bearing of Free Trade upon the wages—the comforts—and the morals of the unfortunate people, engaged in the lower ranks of the trade. With respect to the

operation of Free Trade Measures on the silk-weaver, I will, continued the Noble Lord, take the evidence adduced before a committee which sat in 1832. The first witness to whose evidence I will refer, is Mr. Grout, an extensive silk-manufacturer in Norwich. He states that, up to 1824, the number of hands employed was 3,594, and that their wages averaged 8s. 1½d. per week. In 1831 the number of hands fell to 1,877, and their wages to 3s. 8½d. (Hear, hear.) Thus the gross amount of wages, which up to 1824 amounted to 60,000*l.* had fallen off to 16,000*l.* in 1831 : showing a reduction in wages of 44,000*l.* So much for the beneficial effects of the relaxation of protective duties, as far as the employment of silk weavers is concerned. (Hear, hear, hear.) Now I will refer to the moral condition of the weaver as detailed in the evidence of the same witness. He said it was not only a reduction of wages that they had to submit to, but he had been obliged to discharge a great number. Some of the men had emigrated, others had gone to the poor house; and many of the females had gone to a state of prostitution from necessity. "Their condition (he added) is most abject, and much to be pitied." (Hear, hear.) Mr. Brocklehurst, a Member of this House, was also examined before the same committee. He was asked, "What has been the condition, since 1826, of the people employed in the mills?" He answered, "In 1826, when overtaken by this change, they were living in comfortably furnished houses, and were amply provided for. When distress first assailed them they fell back on their little properties, which they gradually disposed of. They were now reduced to a state of utter destitution; hundreds of them were without change of clothes, and in many instances without a bed, sleeping on straw, and covered with their clothes worn in the day. Gross demoralisation had been the result, and the once respectable and industrious artisan was now broken-hearted, and reduced to pauperism. Two-thirds of the people were found to be in want of the common necessities of life." These are the fruits of your much-lauded Free Trade. (Cheers.) The duties on silk manufactures had then been reduced to something like 30 per cent. It is now proposed to reduce the protection to half that amount. Now, let us see what was the operation of that original reduction of Protection upon wages. The silkweavers assured me, that up to 1823, when their wages were regulated by Act of Parliament, for weaving the article I hold in my hand, which is called royal flocet, they earned 2s. 4d. a day. In 1825 their wages were reduced to 14d. a day. (Hear, hear.) And now, in consequence of the intended reduction, their wages were to be further reduced from 14d. to 12d. a day. My informant assured me, that he could weave, with great industry, twenty yards of royal flocet in a week, consequently a reduction of 2d. per yard would be equivalent to a reduction upon the aggregate work of a week of 3s. 4d. (Cheers.) I ask you then, whether you think that the silkweavers will be benefited by Free Trade? (Cheers from the Protectionists.) I think they were not far wrong when they stated, in the petition which I presented to the House, that for a period of 20 years, experience and common sense had taught them that cheap bread was of no use to man, woman, or child unless they could obtain wages adequate to purchase it. (Loud cheers, and cries of "Divide, divide.") I trust the House will recollect that I

am now fighting the battle of a party whose leaders have deserted them —(Cheers)—and if I cannot wield my weapon with the same skill as the Right Hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury benches do theirs, I trust the House will, for the sake of the cause I am supporting, show me some forbearance. (Cheers.) I shall now go to an article termed ladies' fine velvet. (So we understood the Noble Lord.) So long as the trade was protected the silk weavers received 4s. 3d. a yard for manufacturing this article, and I understand that a very superior journeyman, with great labour, may manufacture from eight to ten yards per week. In consequence of the diminution in the protective duties their wages were reduced, in 1825, to 2s. 6d. a yard, and on Thursday week last, on account of the proposed measure, they received notice of a further reduction of 3d. a yard. Now, Sir, I leave it to the House whether a man who can manufacture ten yards a week, and has his wages reduced 3d. a yard (amounting to 2s. 6d. a week, or 130s. a year) can derive any advantage from cheap bread equivalent to that reduction of wages? (Hear, hear.) It is well known to every gentleman in this House that the estimated consumption of each man per annum is one quarter of wheat. I leave it, then, to the house and to the country to decide, whether, on the supposition that a man by his own labour has to sustain himself, a wife, and three children on a quarter of wheat each, any difference that can arise in the price of wheat in consequence of Free Trade, will compensate him for the loss of 3d. a yard on the article of his manufacture? (Cheers.) Why, it is clear to every one that the poor silk weaver would be better off with his old wages and wheat at 70s. a quarter, than he will be now with his wages reduced 3d. a yard, with wheat reduced to 45s. per quarter. ("Hear, hear," and "No, no.") No! Why, I believe 5 times 25 make 125s., while the loss on his wages amounts to 130s. I challenge any Hon. Gentleman opposite to refute that statement. I ask, would not the silk weavers be better off with wheat at 70s. a quarter, with their wages unreduced, than they will be with reduced wages; with wages reduced 2s. 6d. a week under the Free Trade system, though the price of wheat should be reduced to 45s. a quarter? Great stress has been laid upon the argument, that by opening the trade in corn you will be conferring a benefit on the labouring classes, and for the first time that I ever heard such a strange doctrine propounded, we had heard it maintained from the Treasury Bench, "that the rate of wages has nothing to do with the price of corn;" nay, even more than this, that the rate of wages rise and fall in the inverse ratio to the rise and fall in the price of corn. (Hear, hear.) I confess this novel doctrine sounded strangely in my ears, more especially when I heard it propounded, not only by the First Minister of the Crown, but also by my Right Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department; for I thought I could remember a celebrated address to the landowners of England, wherein my Right Hon. Friend laid it down as a proposition not to be refuted, "that the wages of labour sink to the price of corn, though the taxes remain and must be paid out of diminished earnings." (Cheers.) My Right Hon. Friend, in supporting that proposition, contended that the happiness and prosperity of the lower classes of the people, far from depending on a reduced price of corn, was

apt to be least when prices were lowest. (Hear, hear.) Reviewing the concluding period of the French war, during which the prices of wheat had been as high as 125s., averaging, I believe, somewhere about 100s. a quarter, he tells us that, in 1815 or 1816, "the price of wheat fell to 64s., and then ensued such a scene both of agricultural and commercial distress as this unhappy country had at that time never witnessed." My Right Hon. Friend continued his history down to the years 1821, 1822, and 1823. In 1822 the price of wheat fell to 43s.; and during this period of three years the price of wheat averaged under 50s. We are told now that we have nothing to do but to open the ports and reduce the price of corn, and that comfort, happiness, and contentment will follow, as far as the working classes are concerned. But what says my Right Hon. Friend, writing the history of those three "*bitter years*," when bread was so cheap in 1821, 1822, and 1823? Describing the condition of Ireland, as spoken to in the evidence of Mr. Nolan before the distress Committee of the House of Commons, my Right Hon. Friend says, "In Ireland distress is greatest when provisions are cheapest; then "we see famine without dearth; hunger amidst superabundance of provisions; farmers without a market; labourers without the means of purchase; it was the fall of prices in which famine originated; that fall prevents the tenant from paying the rent; then the miserable stock of the miserable tenantry is seized, next the labourer is left destitute without employment, and then ensues a scene of famine and despair, of tumult and bloodshed suppressed by military force." Such, Sir, was the sad picture drawn by my Right Hon. Friend of the results of low prices in Ireland in 1822. But how was it in England? "Amidst the ruin of the farmer and the manufacturer, the distress of landlords, and the insurrections of a populace without bread and without employment, one class, says my Right Hon. Friend, flourished and was triumphant; the annuitant and the tax-eater rejoiced in the increased and increasing value of money—rejoiced in the sacrifice of productive industry to unproductive wealth—rejoiced in the victory of the drones over the bees." (Hear, hear, hear.) I really think my Right Hon. Friend must have been thinking of the tax-eaters and tax-consumers when, in introducing this measure to the House, he told us that the wages of labour did not depend upon the price of corn. Undoubtedly their wages do not sink to the price of corn, but the contrary. (Cheers.) But I must not forget the speech of the Hon. Member for Wolverhampton, who cast so much obloquy on Gentlemen on this side of the House; and, though I will not attempt to cast back upon him the hard epithets he applied to my Friends on this side of the House, I must say that his speech certainly was not one overflowing with the milk of human kindness. (Hear, hear.) But when the Hon. Member for Wolverhampton comes forward, and stands up as a witness before this House and the country against the landlords of England, and describes them as a set of men wholly indifferent to the sufferings of the poor, and talks of them "as idle consumers, to whom it might justly be made a matter of congratulation, that food was scarce and the people dying of starvation." I think I am entitled to insist that he should himself be questioned upon what in legal phrase in Westminster-hall is, I believe, termed the "*Voir*

dire," and I have a right to ask, and the country to know, whether he is altogether a disinterested witness—whether he has not some pecuniary interest in this matter? I have a right to ask him, and the country has a right to know, whether or no as an Examiner in the Court of Chancery, enjoying a snug sinecure of 1,000*l.* or 1,200*l.* a year out of the taxes levied on the people, he does not come within the category of my Right Hon. Friend—whether he is not “one of those annuitants and tax-eaters who rejoice in the increased and increasing value of money, who rejoice in the sacrifice of productive industry to unproductive wealth; who rejoice in the victory of the drones over the bees?” (Cheers.) Sir, we have been taunted on this side of the House with dealing in revilings of the Right Hon. Gentlemen who have deserted us and their principles on this occasion, and also with having used no arguments in support of our views. I thought in the admirable speech of my Hon. Friend (Mr. S. O’Brien) who sits beside me, replete as it was with argument, as well as in the speeches of many others of my friends around me, especially that of my Hon. Friend the Member for Shrewsbury, we might have well claimed exemption from the unjust taunt, that we have brought no arguments to our support. But to return to the heart-stirring speech of my Hon. Friend the Member for Northamptonshire; my Right Hon. Friend the First Minister of the Crown thought fit to mock the speech of my Hon. Friend, and instead of the touching appeal and reply of tenant and landlord, which my Hon. Friend so well and so feelingly imagined and gave utterance to, my Right Hon. Friend suggested another speech to be put into the mouth of the landlord, in which, out of his supposed and visionary savings by Free Trade, the unhappy landlord was to offer an advance of capital to his tenant to enable him, by improvements of his farm, to compensate in increased quantity for the loss which he might incur through the reduced value of his produce consequent upon the repeal of the Corn Laws. Such an observation, I think, did not come with a good grace from the Right Hon. Baronet. The old landed aristocracy have done their duty to their tenants, but are not in a position to advance capital to enable them to increase the products of the soil. The Right Hon. Gentleman, when he goes down to Drayton Manor, and surveys the broad acres and wide domains which surround that splendid mansion, might have recollected that they once belonged to the old aristocracy of England. He might have remembered that a Bill passed in 1819, changing the currency, and that that Bill bore the name of the Right Hon. Gentleman at its back; and whilst, Sir, in referring to that law, it is far from my wish or meaning to impute any thing but the most perfect innocence of intention, the Right Hon. Gentleman is said to have added by that law half a million sterling to the vast wealth of his family, whilst in a like degree it diminished from the wealth, and crippled the resources of the old landed aristocracy. I think, then, it was rather hard on the part of the Right Hon. Baronet to turn round now upon the old landed proprietors of England, and taunt them with not advancing the capital which, I am sorry to say, they no longer possess, to improve the farms of their tenants, now about to be injured by Free Trade. But, Sir, the Right Hon. Gentleman is himself a landlord, and, if I mistake not, some time in 1842 or 1843,

after passing his tariff, went down and addressed a landlord's speech to some 250 or 300 of his tenantry at Tamworth. I do not think he began, "My good fellows," that might be too familiar in the First Minister of the Crown, and might lead to too great expectations. He did not begin, "My good fellows," but began, "Gentlemen." Destruction of rabbits was promised, something conditional said about hares, long leases too were hinted at: nay, in one instance, a lease was proclaimed to have been actually granted where to be sure the land was run out, and the farm out of condition, and the tenant was to set out with a low rent, which was to rise by a sliding scale as his lease went on. Lastly, after exciting the expectations of his hearers, who were looking, no doubt, to reductions of rent, some to fifteen, some to twenty, and some perhaps even to fifty per cent. my Right Hon. Friend, after adverting to the great advantage of improved stocks, wound up his courage and liberality to the uttermost, and went the length of this gracious announcement, "regardless of the expense of the animal, at my own entire cost, I will purchase, say a bull, and give free access to that animal, not only to my tenants, but to the cows of my tenants as well." But, for my life, I cannot recollect that my Right Hon. Friend, out of his savings from his new Tariff ever hinted a syllable of putting his hands into his breeches pockets, and advancing any capital to his tenants, in compensation for the operation and injury done to them by his new Tariff. Such are the differences between the practice, the speeches, and the professions in this House of my Right Hon. Friend. ("Hear," and cheers; "Order;" "Chair, chair;" "Order, order;" "Hear," and cheers.) I beg leave to say that though this debate has now continued for three weeks, I am the first gentleman who has at all entered into the real state of the case as regards the allegation of a potato famine in Ireland, upon which, be it remembered, is founded the sole case of her Majesty's Ministers for a repeal of the Corn Laws. ("Oh, oh," "Hear, hear," cheers, "Chair," "Order, order, order," "Hear, hear," and cheers.) Well, I may be mistaken, but as far as I can recollect the debate, I am the only gentleman who has taken a practical view of the pretended potato famine in Ireland. ("Hear," and cheers.) They have told us that there is a great calamity impending over Ireland. I do not believe it, but let them prove to us that it is so, and I will venture to say for those that sit around me, that they will be behind no gentlemen in England—(Hear, hear)—in rendering every assistance to the sister kingdom. (Loud cheers from the Agriculturalists.) We have, however, been told a good deal of the extent of the potato disease in Ireland; but what does my Noble Friend the Marquis of Clanricarde say on the subject? He is a resident landlord in the county of Galway, and is himself a cultivator of potatoes. Well, he told me a short time since that the reports had been greatly exaggerated—that he had himself grown 140 acres of potatoes, and that certainly here and there there were a few diseased potatoes to be found, but not so many as to occasion any particular notice to be taken of it, had it not been for the great alarm and clamour that had been previously got up on the subject, chiefly by her Majesty's Ministers encouraging the panic, and sending their potato-famine commissioners to Ireland. ("Hear, hear," and great cheering.) "I firmly believe,"

said my Noble Friend, "that one-half of the mischief has been created by the sending of these very learned commissioners to Ireland, who began their absurd recommendations by advising that all the potatoes should be dug before they were ripe." (Hear, hear.) Common sense might have told them how pernicious a course that was; every practical man knowing that the inevitable consequence of lifting and storing potatoes before they are ripe is, that the potatoes would all decay. (Hear, hear.) The next thing they did was to recommend the application of artificial heat—viz. "kiln-drying the potatoes." I believe, however sound potatoes may be, it is impossible to devise any more certain specific for making them rot than kiln-drying them. (Hear, hear, hear.) I myself witnessed the result of some experiments made by the Duke of Portland at Welbeck, and whilst those potatoes which had been cured with magnesian quick-lime, and those which had been cured with charcoal ashes, after being pitted six weeks proved as sound as the day they were pitted; when the learned professor's pit, the kiln-dried potato pit was opened, I can assure this House that it smoked up like a dunghill, the potatoes cured according to the recipe of her Majesty's Ministers and their learned professors, was one entire mass of corruption;—(Loud cheers)—but that was not all the mischief that the Government and their learned commissioners had done, for they created such a panic about these potatoes, that the people were not only induced, in the hope of saving a portion of them, to rush upon the trial of those suggested methods that proved their destruction, but, from fear of the rot, they hastened to consume their potatoes in every possible way; in the language of the peasantry of Galway, "*to destroy them*," that was, to give them lavishly away to pigs and cattle, not then wanting them—in short, to any thing that would eat them. My Noble Friend told me that from the great excitement that prevailed, even he was himself induced to give them to his pigs and cattle, and even his horses; in fact to dispose of them in any and every way by which he could get them used; before—as he was induced to think—the disease should affect them all; and this all proceeded from the panic caused by sending these commissioners into Ireland. ("Hear, hear, hear," and cheers.) We are told by her Majesty's Ministers that there are four millions of the Irish people on the brink of famine: I therefore wish to ask her Majesty's Ministers what provision they have made for those four millions of poor people? If they honestly believe that there will be four millions of people requiring support for three months, they must know that it will require a million quarters of grain to feed them. But we are told that the order they have sent to the United States for maize to supply their wants, is limited to one hundred thousand quarters, which would afford subsistence during three months, not for four millions, which they say are on the brink of starvation, but only for a tenth part of that number, that is to say, for four hundred thousand. I would, therefore, be glad to know if her Majesty's Government really believe that there will be four millions of people depending upon them for relief for the space of time I have mentioned, how they intend to supply the deficiency? Is it not quite clear that to serve their purposes here they have exaggerated tenfold the extent of the calamity, which in their hearts they believe to exist? (Loud

cheers.) The Right Hon. Baronet, the First Minister of the Crown, has told you that wheat has at this time an import duty of 17s. a quarter upon it, and nothing on earth could induce him to come to the people of England to ask them to pay that price for the purpose of feeding the people of Ireland; but I believe that the Right Hon. Baronet never intended to feed them with wheat, but maize or oats. I am sure Hon. Gentlemen will be rather surprised when I tell them that in January last there were 100,000 quarters of oats imported into this country from Ireland—a quantity corresponding exactly to the Government contract for maize from the United States as a provision for the starving people of Ireland. Well, then, I ask, ought not common sense to have taught the Government the propriety of purchasing these Irish oats, thereby conferring a double benefit upon the people of that country. In the first place they would have been paying the Irish people for the produce of their land; and in the next place they would have had the supply ready at hand when and where the scarcity required it. (Hear, hear.) As I understand, the poorer classes of the people of Ireland generally cultivate one acre, perhaps of oats, and two of potatoes; the oats are grown on the same land only once in three years; it is upon the potatoes that they generally depend for their food; and they sell their oats to pay their rent, and to supply perhaps some other few necessities and comforts of life; therefore, had the Government adopted the course I mention, it would, as I said before, have conferred a double benefit on that country. (Loud cheers.) Sir, I now come to the pretext of “*famine in the land;*” out of the false cry of which in England, and the exaggerated cry of which in Ireland, this Government measure for the repeal of the Corn Laws has really arisen—and since that cry first obtained importance from the sanction it received in a voice from Scotland, conveyed in a letter dated the 15th of November, and written by the Noble Lord the Member for the city of London. I will take the kingdom of Scotland first, and examine how much real truth there was in the alarm of famine thus proclaimed from Edinburgh in November. That my authorities may be above all suspicion, they shall be restricted to such information as may be gathered from the printed circulars of the corn trade itself. I will begin with the circular of Messrs. A. and R. Smart and Co. of Montrose, of date the 12th of December, 1845. What say they?—They say,

Sir—they say *in consequence of the alarm and uncertainty about the state of the potatoes, we have not submitted our report of the harvest earlier to you, in order that we might gather more particular information, and ascertain how they would keep in the pits. After careful inquiry, we have come to the conclusion that from this district there will be fully the usual quantity exported of sound quality.* Though they have, in many localities, been tainted more or less with the disease prevalent in other parts of the kingdom, and have in some few instances suffered partially in the pits; *yet, as none but those which are tainted will be used for cattle, or other feeding purposes, we think fully as many will be made available for human food as in a season of abundance.*

“Wheat, notwithstanding the untoward character of the season, is proving a fair average crop in quantity, but of various quality. There is not a large breadth cultivated, and only a trifling quantity exported

from this district, but from some of the northern counties, where we ship, a good many cargoes can be spared. THE WEIGHTS AT PRESENT RUN FROM 56 to 62½lb.; BUT AS THE SEASON ADVANCES WE MAY EXPECT THEM TO INCREASE.

“Oats are a full average crop, unless on the high and cold lands, where they were exceedingly late, and did not thoroughly ripen. Their quality is fair—weights from 39 to 43lb. Potato oats can be shipped in good condition about 42 to 42½lb.; Angus, 41 to 42lb.

“Viewing all the crops together, we consider the harvest in this district, and all to the north of it, a very abundant one.”

So much, Sir, for the prevalence of dearth in the neighbourhood of and north of Montrose. I will now cross the island and see how it fared in the west of Scotland. This is an account of the Glasgow Corn Trade. It is from *Brown and Co.'s Circular*. Here it is, Sir:—

“Glasgow, Dec. 31, 1845.—We beg to refer to the statement at foot, showing the annual stock of grain in granary since 1841:—

STATE OF STOCKS AT THIS DATE FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS.

		Wheat. Bolls of 240lb.	Barley. Bolls of 320lb.	Oats. Bolls of 264lb.	Beans and Peas Bolls of 4 bushels	Flour.		Oatmeal Loads of 280lb.
						Barrels, 196lb.	Sacks, 280lb.	
1841	{ Free ..	85,800	16,860	67,120	50,180	18,310	7,590	15,040
	{ Bond ..	17,760	730	840	6,540	12,289	None.	None.
1842	{ Free ..	164,850	9,088	54,450	27,286	6,597	2,370	15,929
	{ Bond ..	18,073	5,525	None.	25,810	12,708	None.	None.
1843	{ Free ..	140,267	15,954	52,047	16,779	15,489	6,023	41,217
	{ Bond ..	13,151	None.	None.	25,927	330	None.	None.
1844	{ Free ..	112,212	24,767	20,724	17,076	22,547	7,054	33,675
	{ Bond ..	29,326	None.	None.	927	6,082	None.	None.
1845	{ Free ..	158,333	18,674	29,162	12,325	56,353	23,789	24,837
	{ Bond ..	78,854	67	None.	2,552	9,449	None.	None.

Showing an absolute excess in the stock on hand on the 31st of last December of no less than 54,264 bolls of wheat, of 46,497 barrels and 21,419 sacks of wheat flour, as compared with the largest stock of wheat and wheat flour ever before known to be on hand in the city of Glasgow at any corresponding period of the last five years!!! Oh, Sir, what a tale of famine is this to have been imposed as such upon a credulous nation, and wherewithal to have half frightened the people of England and the Queen's Ministers quite out of their senses!!! But, Sir, with the leave of the House, I must read one sentence more in the circular of Messrs. Brown and Co., as in my opinion it will go far to enlighten this House in regard to the progress of the Scottish nation as regards their comforts and condition. What say Messrs. Brown? They say—“Our stock of wheat on hand exceeds by far that of any previous year, notwithstanding a decided considerable change in the national taste from oatmeal to wheaten flour, of which the consumption has been unprece-

dented. *The latter, we are inclined to think, applies to most of the large towns in this kingdom. Of wheat the crop of 1844 was of a superior order both in yield and in quality all over the United Kingdom and Ireland. The productiveness of that crop becomes more apparent on comparison with former stocks and this year's, which latter, with a trifling exception, is all of the growth of 1844, exhibiting an increase of 46,120 bolls of free, and 49,528 bolls of bonded over 1844. The crop of 1845, considered a fair average in quantity, but deficient in quality, has not yet got into condition, so that we are lying heavy on old wheat for bakers' purposes. The value of wheat, compared with last year's same period is about 10s. higher for old, and 4s. for new, per boll of 240lb."*

Thus, Sir, I have shown you, not only that so far from a famine prevailing in Glasgow and in the west of Scotland in December last, the stores of grain were unprecedented, whilst a very considerable improvement had taken place in the condition, the comforts, and the habits of the people of Scotland. (Loud cries of "Hear, hear," cheers, and "Order, order." When his Lordship, on turning to the side from whence the interruption proceeded, asked)—Why should I thus be interrupted? Is it because I speak of the comforts of the people—is it nothing in the estimation of some to speak of their comforts?—(Hear, hear)—to speak of the comforts of the poor. ("Hear, hear," and cheers.) I am anxious to show that my friends here, who have argued for Protection—who have shown the advantages which have resulted from protective laws—are the real friends of the poor. (Hear, hear.) I am anxious to show the wonderful increase which has taken place in all that pertains to the food of the people, under Protection. (Hear, hear.) In Glasgow, a decided change for the better has taken place; there the people have advanced in their taste and in their comforts, from oatmeal to the use of wheaten flour. ("Hear, hear," and cheers.) Whereas, let it be remembered, when the Right Hon. Baronet introduced his Corn Law in 1842, he was obliged to acknowledge the immense number that were there (I forget whether in Glasgow or in Paisley) existing only upon charity—but this I remember well, the numbers then kept alive by charity were 17,000!!! (Hear, hear.) It would appear, too, that the pleasing advance in Glasgow was also visible in various other towns in Scotland. (Hear, hear.) That the wheat crop in 1844 was so superior in quality and amount in comparison with any former stock, that even in last December they had not commenced the use of the crop for the year 1845—(Great cheers)—besides the large quantities in bond. (Immense cheering, and considerable interruption, intermingled with loud cries of "Order, order.") I make no charge against those who are opposed to us on this question. (Hear, hear.) I am only defending my party by indubitable evidence from the attacks of indifference to the comforts of the poor which were advanced against us—"Hear, hear," and cheers.)—that we cared not so we preserved our own interests, though they were starving. (Hear, hear.) You first make a charge against us, and then you are afraid to hear the answer. (Great cheering from the agriculturalists.) Last, as regards Scotland, I travel back to the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, from whence, on the 15th of November, the celebrated letter of the

Noble Lord the Member for the city of London was written. I am now going to read you some extracts from the circular of Messrs. Grindlay, Cowan, and Co. It is dated

“Leith, Dec. 17, 1845.

“Sir—Although our harvest has been finished fully six weeks ago, we have deferred our report till now, that we might obtain more detailed information as to the result,

“*Wheat may amount to about an average quantity*; the quality is of all grades, from fine to very inferior, the medium however preponderates; the whole is sound and wholesome. The weights are from 54, 58, 60, 62, and 63lb. per bushel.

“Oats are upon the whole a full average quantity, but are very various in quality and condition: those grown upon the coast are bright, heavy, and handsome, while the produce of the high country, though sound, and of tolerable colour, is mixed with greens, and extremely damp and light. They are all weights, from 35, 38, 40, 42, 43, 44lbs. per bushel.

“*Potatoes are a good crop as regards quantity*; they have been affected by the disease throughout the whole of this district, but in a greater or lesser degree; those raised early and put into pits without ventilation went rapidly to decay, but such as were taken up later, and where proper precautions were taken in storing them, have kept much better, and the disease among them is not making rapid progress. *We have, in the meantime, abundance of good quality for human food, and we have reason to believe that that will be the case till spring. The decayed ones make good cattle feed.*

“*In the counties north of us, the corn crops generally are fully better than in this quarter, and in Aberdeen, Banff, Moray, Ross, and Sutherland-shires potatoes are little if at all affected.*

“Just before harvest our stocks of grain here were very limited indeed. The disease in the potatoes, and the very unfavourable weather, *gave such an impulse to the market as has since attracted large supplies, both home and foreign, so much so that, notwithstanding the considerable sales which were effected, we are now so completely CHOKED, that granary room is not to be found, and we think a considerable portion of still-expected arrivals from abroad will have to go to other ports.*”

Good heavens, Sir, what a description of a country of famine! so COMPLETELY CHOKED that granary room is not to be found!!!

“*The quantity of grain in bond here consists of about 65,000 quarters of wheat, 17,000 qrs. of barley, and 4,000 qrs. of oats, besides which we have about 40,000 to 45,000 qrs. of home wheat, chiefly very fine old English.* [And pray listen again to this, Sir.]—“*In fact, in place of the general outcry of ‘famine,’ we are literally labouring under REPLETION.*” [Literally they say, Sir, labouring under repletion. (Great cheering.)] “*To the quantity of wheat under bond, about 20,000 qrs. still on the passage, will soon be added, besides a considerable quantity of barley and other grain.*”

From the circular just read, it then appears that the potato crop was good as regarded Scotland generally—(Hear, hear)—that there was an abundance of potatoes of good quality for human food. (Hear, and cheers.) I would ask, then—was there any ground to change the whole

policy of the country on such a miserable pretence of famine as this? ("Hear," and cheers, with interruption for some time, and loud cries of "Order.") It would appear from this document, that, so far from there being any just ground for an outcry on the subject of famine, they were literally labouring under repletion. (Hear, hear.) Sir, I have now done with Scotland, and, I trust, sufficiently disposed of the unfounded pretence of a famine in Scotland. I will now see how this matter of famine stood in England. Sir, in the month of December last, I saw a letter from a gentleman in Liverpool, whose name I think would be entitled to no little weight in this House,—the letter was signed "John Robert Gladstone," and what did it say, Sir? It said the outcry about famine was all a mistake, as, at that time, there were not less than 200 warehouses in Liverpool as cramm'd with grain as they could hold. (Great cheering.) One more statement, and so far as regards the wheat famine I have done. Sir, on the 5th of January, 1845, a year admitted by all to be a year of extraordinary abundance, the stock of wheat and wheat flour in the United Kingdom amounted to 457,193 quarters, whilst in London it did not exceed 153,003 quarters—whilst on the corresponding day of the present year, when you tell us there is a famine, there were bonded in the United Kingdom, no less a quantity than 1,079,030 qrs. of wheat and wheat flour, whilst in the city of London alone there were in granary under bond 418,422 quarters of wheat and wheat flour; being in this year of famine a quantity within a few thousand quarters, equal to the entire quantity in bond in the whole of the United Kingdom in the preceding year, which you all admit to have been a year of extraordinary abundance. (Loud cheers.) But we are told by my Right Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department, "*that bread was rapidly rising to the war prices.*" Why, Sir, was ever such an unfounded statement made in this House? Bread rapidly rising to the war prices! Bread at a famine price! Why, Sir, in the war in the year 1800, or 1801, if I mistake not, bread was actually 11d. a pound! Eleven pence for one pound! Whilst I find in the last week, these two statements as to the prices of bread in London and in Liverpool, in the last week:—"Price of Bread this Week—The highest price of bread in the metropolis is 9d. the 4lb. loaf; some bakers, however, sell 2d. below that rate." "Price of Bread and Potatoes in Liverpool—In this part of England, where every article of food is as dear, if not dearer, than in any other town in the kingdom, potatoes have fallen in price, within the last few days, from 4s. to 3s. per measure of 90lbs. weight, and the 4lb. loaf of excellent wheaten bread from 7d. to 6d.—*Liverpool Mail.*" Why, Sir, if I do not err greatly, the price of the 4lb. loaf was 10d. in 1841, when we turned out the Whig Government for proposing so low a protection as an 8s. fixed duty, and it had actually risen to 10½d. a short while before the Right Hon. Baronet, the First Minister of the Crown, introduced his bill of 1842, which is now the law of the land; and yet I cannot for my life recollect that either he or my Right Hon. Friend, in the course of those discussions, spoke even of 10½d. as a famine price! (Cheers.) But my Right Hon. Friend says, the law of 1842 has failed, inasmuch as *when it was wanted the Sliding Scale refused to slide.* Sir, I think I have shown good reason why it would

not slide. in the exposure that was made in the course of the month of December, of—I can't call it "*the great fact*" (another monosyllable would be more applicable)—of the alleged famine in the land. But what says our own great Duke—England's great Duke—on this subject? The Duke of Wellington tells you, "that he saw no reason for opening the ports, inasmuch as whenever a deficiency should appear, prices would rise, and, under the existing law, the ports would open themselves." And with regard to Ireland he tells you, that although there has been a great loss of potatoes, and there must ensue in consequence considerable privation to a great portion of the people of Ireland; from all accounts there is no ground for believing that there is any danger of an absolute deficiency of food in Ireland (Loud cheers.) We have been told, by the First Minister of the Crown, that there are 4,000,000 of people on the borders of famine and starvation, but I will prove to you that her Majesty's Ministers believe no such thing. ("Oh, oh," "hear, hear," cheers, interruption, and cries of "Order, order.") It is five weeks ago this day, that the Member for Somersetshire, who moved for a return of the highest prices of potatoes in each of the last seven years in each of all the market towns of Ireland; but that return has not yet been produced. I want to know why it is kept back?—why are we kept in the dark? ("Hear, hear," cheers, "order, order.") The Right Hon. Baronet has taunted us with being unwilling to listen to the history of famine in Ireland; he said that it appeared to us a matter which was distasteful. ("Hear," "no, no," "order, order.") That it was distasteful to many Gentlemen on this side of the House. I beg leave on the part of my Hon. Friends to say, that what was distasteful to us, was not the length of the details, but it appeared to us that the Right Hon. Baronet did not tell us the whole truth. ("Hear, hear," "order, order.") That was what was distasteful to us, and not the length of the details. ("Hear, hear," and cheers.) Sir, I trust the House will allow me to proceed. I can assure the House that, tedious as I know and feel that I must be, possessing neither wit or talents to enliven the debate, there is no Member in this House, however wearied he may be with listening to me, who feels that weariness so painfully as I feel the obligation of being the cause of it. Nothing but the most imperative sense of duty could have induced me to come forward on this occasion to trespass upon the valuable time of this House. Nothing but the circumstance of those who advocate the same principles with myself having been abandoned by our leaders could have induced me to undertake a task so distasteful to me. I think, having sat eighteen years in this House, and never once having trespassed upon its time before in any one single great debate, I may appeal to the past as a proof that I duly weigh the very small measure of my abilities, and that I am painfully conscious of my proper place in this House; that I feel deeply how unworthy I am of the indulgence of which I have already received so large a portion, and that nothing but an emergency such as this could have dragged me out to intrude upon the time of a House so replete on every side with men of such very superior talents, abilities, and eloquence to myself. (General cheers.) The Right Hon. Baronet gave us an account of a London provision dealer who went a tour into Kent, and after visiting the gardens

in Kent, returned by the railway, and as he was whirled along in the train looked out of the window of his railway carriage, and saw the potatoes looked black ; he read us also a letter from Yorkshire, written by a Mr. Wood whom nobody knows. (Laughter, "Order, order,") I happen to know something about Yorkshire. But I want know why, instead of the letter of this Mr. Wood, the Right Hon. Gentleman did not favour us with the opinions which I presume he must have learnt, of my Hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire, the seconder of the address, upon this subject of the potato disease in Yorkshire ? My Hon. Friend tells me, that in the month of December he called upon my late lamented Friend Lord Wharnccliffe, himself the Lord-Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire, himself too a Cabinet Minister, and told him, that there was no foundation for the cry of famine as regarded the state of the potato crop in Yorkshire. Now, Sir, as this was not a private or confidential communication, it is hardly to be supposed my late lamented Friend, Lord Wharnccliffe, would keep it back from her Majesty's Ministers, and if not, I must beg leave to ask, when Mr. Wood's letter was communicated, how came the information from my Hon. Friend the Member for the West Riding, to be kept back from this House ? (Hear, hear.) I shall now go to Ireland. (Hear, hear.) We have heard a great many statements as to the disease of the potato in Ireland ; statements from police, and from inspectors of police as well as from various other quarters. (Hear, hear, hear.) But, Sir, I must take leave to ask, what has become of the reports of the Lieutenants of the counties of Carlow and Kilkenny ? My Noble Friend, the Member for Derby, is Lieutenant of the county of Carlow, and he made a report to the Irish Government ; and the Lieutenant of the county of Kilkenny made a report to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Lord Besborough, long a Cabinet Minister, is the Lieutenant of the county of Kilkenny, and I will ask, if there is any man in England or in Ireland whose opinion, on account of his business-like habits, of his great practical knowledge, and the warm and affectionate interest which for a long period of years he has ever taken in every thing which concerns the true interests of Ireland, and more especially of the peasantry of Ireland—is there any man whose opinion could have had greater weight ? Is there any man whose opinion would have been so willingly listened to by this House or by the country, either in England or in Ireland, as that of the Earl of Besborough upon an Irish subject ? Well, Sir, I am assured, and I appeal for the truth of my statement to my Noble Friend the Member for Derby, that the Earl of Besborough took the greatest possible pains to ascertain the truth—to ascertain the real state of the case as regards the failure of the potato crop in Ireland, and, having done so, made an elaborate report to the Irish Government. Well, then, I desire to know why Lord Besborough's report to the Irish Government is suppressed ? Is it because Lord Besborough told both sides of the story, and that his report would not assist the present policy of her Majesty's Ministers ? (Loud cries of "Hear, hear.") I can also appeal to my Noble Friend the Member for and Lieutenant of the county of Down ; my Noble Friend made his report to the Irish Government. Why have we not had laid before us the report of my Noble Friend the

Lieutenant of the great county of Down? (Hear, hear.) Then, again, there is my Hon. and Gallant Friend the Member for the county of Antrim, who was canvassing the county of Antrim throughout the month of December, and feeling a deep interest in the prospects of the Irish people, lost no opportunity of making every possible inquiry as to the true state of the potato crop; and my Hon. and Gallant Friend has assured me that the invariable answer he received was—"We have here and there a bad one, but we have no fault to find with the potato crop." (Hear, hear.) Sir, I can also appeal to my Right Hon. Friend the Member for Chatham as an evidence in proof of the undiseased state of the potato crop in the county of Roscommon in December last. It was a little before Christmas last year, that after having witnessed the result of several experiments tried under the directions of the Duke of Portland at Welbeck with diseased potatoes, thinking I might be of service to Ireland, I wrote to my Right Hon. Friend, who was then staying at Lord Crofton's in the county of Roscommon, the results of those experiments; and first I had to tell him of the disastrous results of those modes of cure especially recommended by certain learned professors sent to Ireland by her Majesty's Ministers; the invariable effect of the application of artificial heat, of "kiln-drying," as recommended originally by these learned professors, was, *that the potatoes one and all became rotten!!!* (Hear, hear.) Sir, I myself witnessed, and so I wrote to my Right Hon. Friend then in Roscommon, the opening of the pit cured according to the prescription of those learned professors, and I can assure the House when "the professor's pit" was opened, it steamed up like an opened dunghill, such was the state of putrefaction which it was in. Anxious to communicate to my Right Hon. Friend any information that I deemed might be useful to Ireland, I wrote to him an account of the experiments which appeared to me to be most successful, and more especially of an experiment made with magnesian quick-lime, which seemed in every way to be entirely and pre-eminently successful. But what was my Right Hon. Friend's reply?—"Much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken, but there is no potato disease in Roscommon." (Prolonged cheering.) Sir, again I can appeal to my Right Hon. Friend the Secretary for the Admiralty and a Member for the county of Tyrone, who only returned from Ireland from the county of Tyrone on the first of January. He will tell the House that potatoes were then in Ireland only 3d. per stone. In like manner, I can appeal to my Hon. Friend the Member for the Queen's County. He assures me that potatoes at this time are only 2½d per stone in the principal markets of the Queen's County, though here and there in the mountainous districts, the potatoes may have entirely failed. Well, Lord de Vesci, the father of my Hon. Friend, is Lord-Lieutenant for the Queen's County, and he, too, made a report to the Irish Government. Why have we not that report? But how can it be honestly, or with truth, affirmed that there is famine in the land, with potatoes at no more than 3d. and 4d. a stone? Why, good God, when Mr. Burke wrote of scarcity in 1794, potatoes were 5s. a bushel; and, upon looking at Mr. Tooke's prices, I find that the average price of potatoes in the whole of the cotton manufacturing districts of England, during eleven years, from 1810 to 1820,

both inclusive, averaged $7\frac{1}{2}$ d. per stone, whilst the highest price mounted up to $17\frac{1}{2}$ d. per stone, and the lowest price was 5 3-5. And, depend upon it, the money price is always the best criterion of the crop. Sir, we have been told by my Right Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, that bread was approaching a famine price, and that bread was getting up to the war prices, and yet the Sliding Scale refused to slide; why, how stands the fact? In the war, in the years 1800 and 1801, bread was at one time as high as elevenpence a pound, 3s. 8d. the 4lb. loaf, whilst the highest price of bread of the finest quality, during the last winter, has been 9d., or at outside, with some few bakers, $9\frac{1}{2}$ d. the 4lb. loaf;—mark, bread of the first quality;—for there has been no time since the passing of the present Corn Law, that good bread, household bread of excellent quality, could not have been bought in this metropolis, for 7d. the 4lb. loaf. But what was the price of bread in the winter of 1841 and 1842, a few weeks prior to the introduction into this House of the present Corn Law? Why, Sir, it was actually tenpence-halfpenny! And the average price of wheat at the time when her Majesty's present Ministers beat her Majesty's late Ministers, on the question of an 8s. fixed duty on corn, the average price of wheat was upwards of 62s., and the import duty 24s. 8d. The average price is now 56s. 7d., and the duty only 17s. How then can my Right Hon. Friend have the face to say that wheat and bread are approaching *Famine Prices*? Sir, I now come to the great challenge which is ever and anon put forth by the Anti-Corn Law League, and now by their disciples, her Majesty's Ministers. How are we, they ask, with our limited extent of territory, to feed a population annually and rapidly increasing, at the rate of 300,000 a year, as generally stated by the Hon. Member for Stockport—a rate increased by my Noble Friend the Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire to a thousand a day, or 365,000 a year. Sir, I will meet the Hon. Gentleman and my Noble Friend, as well as her Majesty's Ministers, upon this ground, and I will undertake to show not only that for the last five and forty years the produce of the land has outstripped the growth of the population, but that there is ample scope even without any new discoveries in the science of agriculture, for a continued excess of production over population, at all events for the next twenty years to come. I will first examine the past. I find, Sir, that the population of England and Wales, which in 1801 amounted to 8,872,980, rose to 10,150,615 in 1811, being an increase of $14\frac{1}{2}$ per cent upon the first period; and that by 1821 it had grown to 11,978,875, being a further increase of $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; the aggregate increase on the 20 years amounting to 3,105,895. Sir, you will now expect me to furnish my proofs wherein this immense growth of the population was provided for; these are my proofs. I find that the select committee of the House of Commons, which sat in 1813 to inquire into the state of the corn trade, of which I believe Sir H. Parnell was the chairman, stated in their report, "That through the extension of, and improvements in cultivation, the agricultural produce of the kingdom had been increased one-fourth during the ten years preceding the time of their inquiry." Sir, the House will recollect that during the same period the population had increased not one-fourth, but $14\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. which is only

a fraction above one-seventh. But, Sir, if there were any doubt about this fact I might triumphantly refer to the number of Inclosure Bills, and to the number of acres of waste lands brought into cultivation during the exciting period of the war prices, when wheat averaged nearly 100s. a quarter. Sir, I find by a reference to Parliamentary documents that between the twenty years from 1801 to 1821, no less than 1,677 Inclosure Bills were passed for the inclosure and reclamation of no less than 3,068,910 acres of land, being an average of 83 Inclosure Acts, and an average of 153,445 acres a year. I have before stated that the aggregate increase of the population during the same period was 3,105,895; the House, therefore, will observe, that since 1801 and up to 1821, for every new mouth born there was as near as possible a new acre of land brought into cultivation. (Loud cheers.) Sir, I must now proceed to the period between 1821 and 1845. Prices fell after 1820. In 1822, wheat fell to 43s. a quarter, and the rage for inclosures correspondingly diminished. I find from 1821 to 1835 inclusive, the average number of Inclosure Bills greatly fell off, and so, of course, did the new acreage brought into cultivation. The total number of Inclosure Acts in those 15 years amounted to no more than 262, and the acreage reclaimed to 442,860, showing an average of about 16 Inclosure Bills, taking in 29,524 acres a year. In the last ten years there occurred a still further decrease in these respects, the Inclosure Acts, in the last ten years, amounting in the aggregate to only 150, or 15 a year. I do not know the number of acres included in the inclosures during this last period; but the whole shows a sad falling off, subsequent to the fall in the price of wheat, as compared with the period of war prices. It may be as well to state also, in passing, that the average of the last four years, since the last modification of the Corn Laws, showing only an annual average of *eleven* Drainage and Inclosure Acts. Sir, having failed under continually falling prices to give you evidence of new lands brought into cultivation so as to keep pace with the growing population of the country from 1821 to 1844, I must look elsewhere for evidence of an increased growth of corn, and I am happy to say I readily find it in the improved cultivation of the land. The population of England and Wales which was 11,978,875 in 1821; in 1831 had increased to 13,089,338, being an increase on 1821 of 16 per cent.; in 1841, it further increased to 14,995,508, or 14 per cent. on 1831; estimating this increase or something like it to have continued to 1844, and assuming the population in 1844 to have grown to 15,662,274, the gross increase of population in 1844 as compared with 1821, would be something under 32 per cent. I must, therefore, turn to the improved cultivation of the soil of England, and see what has been going on there to meet this prolific increase of the population. Well, Sir, I find that in 1821, in his evidence before the agricultural distress committee, Mr. Wakefield—an authority universally quoted by all great writers on agricultural statistics—Mr. Wakefield computed the average produce of all the wheat lands in England, at no more than **SEVENTEEN BUSHELS PER ACRE**. But in 1840 Mr. McCulloch was of opinion that the produce of the wheat lands of England had been raised on an average to *twenty-six bushels* **PER ACRE**, whilst in 1844 Mr. McGregor estimates that such had been the rapid improvement in the

science of agriculture, and in the cultivation of the soil, that the average produce of wheat throughout England and Wales had mounted up to **TWENTY-EIGHT BUSHELS PER ACRE**. What, then, is the result of this comparative statement of the growth of the population with the growth of corn to feed them between 1821 and the year 1844. The results are, that whilst the population increased at the rate of less than 32 per cent. the growth of wheat has, during the same period, increased no less than 64 per cent. (Great cheering from the Protectionists.) Sir, it may be asked if such is the increased produce of wheat, as compared with the population—how comes it that we are still, to a certain extent as regards bread corn, an importing nation? I rejoice to think that it is to be accounted for in the universally improved condition, and the enlarged command of food, by the working classes of the people. Sir, I have myself, in the course of this evening, shown to you, that the taste of the people of Scotland, through increased affluence, has, throughout the manufacturing towns of that kingdom, in a considerable degree changed from oatmeal to wheaten bread. You have heard the Right Hon. Gentleman the Vice-President of the Board of Trade affirm, that the consumption of bread in this metropolis has been ten per cent. higher in the last year than in any previous year; but we have still higher authority for this gratifying belief in Mr. Porter's *Progress of the Nation*, wherein, after contrasting the duration of life in England as compared with other countries; showing, that whilst in Sweden and Denmark the average number of deaths is 1 in 48; in Holland it is 1 in 43; in France, 1 in 40; in the United States, 1 in 37; in Prussia, 1 in 36; and in Wurtemberg, 1 in 33; in England—in happy England, it is only 1 in 59; he goes on to show, that in England and Wales, in 1800, the deaths were 1 in 47; in 1811, 1 in 53; and in 1831, 1 in 58; now, 1 in 59: accounting for this continually diminishing mortality, this improvement of health, and prolongation of life, by the vast amendment in the condition of the people; the less crowded state of their dwellings; the superiority and cheapness of their clothing; to better medical assistance; greater personal cleanliness, and above all **TO THE COMMAND OF BETTER KINDS OF FOOD**. Sir, the year 1845 alone remains to be accounted for; but I think I shall have no difficulty in showing, setting aside all other improvements in agriculture, that by the importation and application to the land of guano alone, there must have been an increase in the produce of the land far more than equivalent to even the 365,000 additional mouths assumed to have been born, by my Noble Friend the Member for the West Riding, in 1845. Sir, we are informed that in the year 1845 no less a quantity than 280,000 tons of guano, at an expense to the farmers of somewhere about 2,000,000*l.* sterling, were imported into this country; that of this, 200,000 tons, or in other words 4,000,000 cwt., were last year expended upon the land. Of this I will assume that one half would be applied to the growth of wheat, and the other half to the growth of turnips, preparatory to next year's wheat crop. To begin, then, with wheat. According to the experiments tried and recorded in the *Royal Agricultural Journal*, it would seem, that by the application of 2 cwt. of guano to an acre of wheat land, the produce would be increased by one quarter per acre. At this rate 100,000 tons, or 2,000,000

cwt. of guano, would add 1,000,000 quarters of wheat to the crop, or bread for one year for 1,000,000 of people. But to be quite sure not to exceed a correct estimate, I will assume that it would require 3 cwt. of guano to an acre to produce an *extra* quarter of wheat. According to this estimate, 100,000 tons of guano applied to the land in 1845, must have added 666,666 quarters of grain to the wheat crop, or, in other words, bread for 666,666 additional mouths. (Great cheering from the agriculturalists.) Now for turnips: Mr. Everitt, of South Crake, near Fakenham, in Norfolk, has, in like manner, proved that 2 cwt. of guano will add 10 tons per acre to the turnip crop. But again, for fear of exaggeration, I will suppose that 3 cwt. per acre would be requisite to create such increased fertility—in this case 2,000,000 cwt. of guano would add 6,666,660 tons of turnips to the natural unmanured produce of the crop. I believe it is generally considered that one ton of Swede turnips would last twenty sheep, three weeks; and that each sheep should gain half a pound of meat per week, or one pound and a half in three weeks; thus, twenty sheep feeding on one ton of turnips in three weeks should, in the aggregate, make, as the graziers say, 30lbs. of mutton. But, to be quite sure to be under the mark, I will assume that one ton of turnips will only make half this amount of mutton: multiply, then, 6,666,660 by 15, and you have no less than 99,999,900lbs. of mutton as the fruits of 100,000 tons of guano; which, at 92lbs. per man, which is the average Englishman's allowance—or, in other words, meat, mutton, for 1,860,955—nearly 2,000,000 of people. (Loud cheers.) Such, Sir, will have been the produce of the last year's crops, made luxuriant by the application of guano; but after the turnip crop, fed off by sheep, as a necessary consequence, would follow a productive wheat crop in 1846; added to which, it will be recollected, that I said before that there remained of the 280,000 tons of guano imported in 1845, 80,000 tons, as stock in hand for the coming year of 1846. ("Divide, divide," "Hear, hear," and great confusion.) Well, but you have challenged us to show how we could feed the people, and will you not allow me to reply to your challenge? ("Hear, hear," loud cheering, and cries of "Adjourn.") God knows, if you had not taunted us and thrown out this challenge, I would not have troubled you. (Cheers, and cries of "Hear, hear.") You have challenged me to show how the agricultural interest could provide food for the people under the protective system. I have answered your challenge, and, as I think, have triumphantly shown you that this country possesses the power of feeding its population, and under the influence and encouragement of Protection, has fed its population, as I will show you, better than the people of any other country of Europe are fed. ("Hear, hear, hear," "oh, oh," cheers, and cries of "Divide, divide.") Well, Sir, I have shown you that we have most successfully fed the growing population of this country up to the present time; that, under the influence of Protection, the agricultural produce of the country in a remarkable manner has outstripped, and continues to outstrip the growth of the population; it remains for me to show that there exist the means and the scope for its continuing to do so. Sir, these means exist in the still remaining wastes in Great Britain, and more especially in Ireland, which are stated to be capable of being

brought into profitable cultivation. Sir, I find in Mr. Porter's "Progress of the Nation," which I have already quoted, this estimate of waste lands thus remaining waiting for cultivation :—

	Statute Acres,
England	3,454,000
Wales	530,000
Scotland	5,950,000
Ireland	4,900,000
British Isles	166,000

Total.....15,000,000

Sir, assuming that in the course of the next 20 years these 15,000,000 acres of wastes should be brought into cultivation, and that they be made to produce the present average of England—that is to say, 28 bushels of wheat per acre in four years; the annual average produce of the lands now waste would, at the end of the next twenty years, prove equal to the growth of 10,075,000 quarters of wheat, or bread annually for an increased population of 10,075,000 of souls; an estimate of increase which must by all be admitted to be fully equal to any increased growth of the population of the United Empire of Great Britain and Ireland that can fairly be expected during the next 20 years. (Great cheering from the Protection benches.) We are told by the Hon. Member for Stockport, and by the Hon. Member for Durham, that the English are the worst farmers in the world, and that it is absolutely necessary to take away their protection, and to excite them to exertion, by the competition with Free Trade and foreigners, to induce such lazy fellows to exert themselves. I will not fatigue the House by quoting documents—(Hear, hear, hear)—or I could show that England produces, comparatively speaking, much more than France, or even Holland, and I could show you, from the testimony of honourable and high-minded foreign writers, whose authority would not be disputed, and who appear to have more candour, and to possess higher feelings of generosity, than some of our own countrymen towards the farmers of England, that in England not only a better system of farming prevails, but that there is a larger produce, compared with the space cultivated, than in any other country in the world. (Cheers, and cries of "Divide, divide," and confusion, in the midst of which the Noble Lord proceeded to quote various facts to prove his assertion, but from the confusion which prevailed it was impossible to catch a single sentence. When, at length, the confusion had in some measure subsided, we understood the Noble Lord to say,)—Sir, I might at great length quote the authority of a distinguished French author—I mean Monsieur de Chevalier Tapiés—in proof of this assertion; but at this late hour of the night, when the House is so wearied, I will only trespass further on its attention whilst I state that Monsieur de Chevalier Tapiés says, and in this Mr. M'Gregor confirms him, that whilst France only produces, on the average, 14 bushels of wheat per acre, Great Britain produces 28; and that whilst the cattle, sheep and pigs in England, even in 1814 (since when the greatest improvement has taken place in the breed of every kind of animals in this

country), had doubled in weight since 1710,—those of France appear at the present day to be precisely of the same weight with the farming stock of England in 1710. He then gives what he conceives to have been the weight of these creatures in England in 1710 and in 1814, as follows :—

	1710.	lbs.	1814.
An ox usually weighed		370	800
A calf		50	140
A sheep		28	112
A lamb.....		18	35
A pig		60	84

I may here as well observe, that in 1842, Sir Charles Lemon, a high authority, estimated the average weight of the carcase of an ox at 800lbs. and those of sheep at 80lbs. Well, Sir, with all this disparity in size between the cattle, sheep, and pigs of France with those of England, what says M. le Chevalier Tapiés of their comparative numbers? He says, “England with a population of 14,000,000, and France with a population of 32,000,000, produce as follows:—England, 170,000 horses; 1,250,000 oxen; 10,200,000 sheep. In proportion to her numbers (he says) France ought to produce 400,000 horses; 2,520,000 oxen; 24,000,000 sheep; whereas her actual produce is under 100,000 horses, 800,000 oxen, and under 5,200,000 sheep.” The result of all which is, that according to M. le Chevalier Tapiés’ calculations, that if there were to be a dearth of grain in France and England, that comparing the riches of each country in cattle with their respective population, France would be found to possess fresh meat enough to keep her people from starving to death for three months only, whilst the cattle and sheep, and pigs of England, would keep her people alive for nearly two years. But what does M. le Chevalier Tapiés say of the comparative improvement in the condition of the two people? He says, that the population of Paris having averaged from 1766 to 1775, 511,000; and 890,000 in 1831, he finds that the consumption of the French metropolis was as follows :—

	Population.	Oxen.	Sheep.
1766 to 1775,	511,000	66,000	333,000
1831,	890,000	61,000	278,000

M. le Chevalier Tapiés remarks, that a similar diminution in the consumption of animal food is to be remarked in pretty nearly all the towns of the kingdom; showing a considerable diminution of consumption in the face of a greatly increased population. Now contrast this retrograde movement in the condition of the people of France, with the consumption of this metropolis—

	Cattle.	Sheep.
1833,	152,093	1,167,820
1842,	174,964	1,423,280
Increase....	10,861	255,460

But the falling off in France is not by any means confined to animal food. He gives thus the consumption of Paris in other things, comparing now the years 1821, 1822, when the population of Paris was 678,860, with 1831, when it had increased to 890,000 :—

1821-22. Population 678,860.	1831. Population 820,000.
Sacks of flour	679,860
Cheese, dry lbs.	1,348,500
Wine (hectolitres)	828,440
Brandy (ditto).....	42,774
Beer	148,276
	587,940
	996,369
	776,784
	28,573
	112,359

It does not appear, however, that the condition of France generally has improved since 1830; for it seems that taking the entire of France, her consumption of meat continued to fall off in 1840, as compared with 1830, although, during the same period, her population had increased from 32,569,223, in 1830, to 33,540,910, in 1840. A kilogramme is two pounds and one-fifth.

FRANCE.					
Population.	Beef & Veal. Kils.	Mutton. Kils.	Total Meat. Kils.	Eng weight. Equal to lbs.	
1830 32569223 ..	306172965	87485622	393658587	—	
1840 33540910 ..	298888995	79673321	378562316	832837095	
Diminution in 1840 as compared with 1830	7283970	7812301	15096271	33211796	

Increase of population during the same period, 971,687.

The consumption of England and Wales, during the year 1840, exclusive of pork, was 1,260,336,000lbs., showing, with a population considerably less than half that of France, an excess of consumption of beef, mutton, and veal, of no less than 427,498,905lbs., thus with considerably less than half the number of mouths consuming more than half as much again of beef, mutton, and veal as France. In corroboration of this statement, I find it said in April, 1841, in the Chamber of Peers in France, by M. Cunin Gridain, the Minister of Agriculture in France, that whilst in France the consumption per head is 28lbs. of beef, veal, and mutton, and 21lbs. of "*charcuterie*," which I understand to be pig's meat; altogether 51lbs. He says in England the consumption per head, including "*charcuterie*," is actually 149lbs. (68 kilogrammes). M. Tapiés further observes, that in England the manure expended on the land is nine times that expended upon the land in France. This same impartial historian tells us, moreover, that whilst with our large properties, consequent upon the law of primogeniture, in the course of the last fifty years England has knocked down 200,000 miserable cottages, and replaced them by magnificent farm-houses (*batiments ruraux*), in France, with her small divisions of property (*avec la petite culture*), during the same number of years it is not the cottages but the *chateaux* that have been razed to the ground. I will now turn to Holland, said to be, with the Exception of Great Britain, the best cultivated country in the world. Well, what says Mr Macgregor of the average produce of the wheat lands in Holland? You will recollect that he estimates the average of England at 28 bushels per acre; the average of Holland he estimates at 23 bushels per acre; more than 20 per cent. less than England. Whilst of her ability to feed the people, and of the fullness with which they are fed, he thus expresses himself—"If the labouring popu-

lation of Holland *instead of eating bread and animal food MORE SPARINGLY THAN, PERHAPS, ANY OTHER IN EUROPE, were to consume as great a quantity as the French do*, the corn produced in all the provinces of the kingdom would not probably be equal to HALF the CONSUMPTION!" Now, having already shown, upon the authority of the French Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, that the French people can only afford to eat, and do only, upon an average, eat a third part of the meat and pork commonly cat by the average of Englishmen. I do most cordially hope, before it is too late, that the working classes will come forward and say that they do not wish to see those Protective Laws to British agriculture, under which they have fared so well compared to their neighbours of France and Holland, hastily done away with. (Loud cheers from the Agriculturalists.) Well, then, if there is no country in Europe which can compare in the science or enterprise in agriculture with English and Scottish farmers, perhaps it is in America that you can find our rivals and our superiors,—if you think so, pray hearken to what a noble-minded and generous American says of his British rivals Mr. Wadsworth, who for the generous mention he makes of the people of this country, would do honour to the chivalry of the British ancestry from which he sprung, in a speech delivered at a meeting of an agricultural association of which he is the president, held some three years ago in the state of New York, delivered himself of these memorable sentiments:—"It has been our fate to meet the English on the battle field and upon the ocean, and whenever we have met the results of the contest have been such that neither party has had need to be ashamed, but there is now a more appropriate field of action, that field which the ploughshare furrows; and when we reflect, that whilst England makes her land produce forty bushels of wheat per acre, whilst America can only produce fifteen, we may well acknowledge, *"that England is pretty hard to whip, meet her where we may."* Now, Sir, when disinterested foreigners bear such important and honourable witness as this to our great superiority in farming, I do think it is not a little hard that our own countrymen, manufacturers chiefly, knowing nothing themselves of the science of agriculture, should take upon themselves to hold up to public contempt the agriculturalists of England, as being the very worst, instead of what, in truth, they are, the very best farmers in the world. (Loud cheers from the Agriculturalists, and cries of "Oh, oh," "Divide, divide," from the Free-traders.) Sir, there is one point with regard to the comparative value of wages in France and in England, which I have omitted, but which with the leave of the House I will state. (Cries of "Divide, divide," "Oh, oh," "Order, order.") Sir, it is the poor of whom I am going to speak. You pretend to be the friends of the poor, will you not hear me when I address myself to the interests of the working classes? (Renewed cries of "Oh, oh," and loud cheers and cries of "Adjourn, adjourn," from the Protection benches.) Sir, Monsieur le Tapiés, after noticing that the average price of wheat for the previous eleven years in England had been 56s. 6d., and in France 39s. 7d., proceeds to discuss the question whether the labourer in England with his 21d. per day (i. e. 10s. 6d. per week); or the French labourer in his own country with his wages at 12½d. a day, are best off

in their respective countries, when he comes to the conclusion that the Englishman is very considerably better off. He shows first, that notwithstanding the comparatively low price of wheat in France, it takes a Frenchman in France fifteen days and a quarter to earn in France a hectolitre of wheat; whilst in England, with his higher rate of wages, and much higher price of wheat, it will only take him eleven days and three-tenths; in other words, at the respective prices of wages and bread in their own countries, it would take a Frenchman thirty-eight days' labour, and an Englishman only fifteen days and a quarter, to earn a quarter of wheat; but, as an Englishman in other regards consumes one-fifth more than a Frenchman, it takes an Englishman but 84 days and three quarters' work to purchase his subsistence, whilst it takes a Frenchman ninety-one and a half days' work to procure his. Thus says Monsieur de Tapiés, there is an immense difference in the lot of the two workmen, to the advantage of the Englishman, in whose food, meat, beer, tea, and sugar abounds, whilst in that of the Frenchman it only enters as a rare luxury. Those, therefore, says the French writer, commit a great error, who advance the doctrine that the English people are a miserable people, as regards their system of subsistence, and their means of paying for it. My Right Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on the 10th of June last, in resisting the motion of the Hon. Member for Wolverhampton, for the Repeal of the Corn Laws, emphatically declared that the inevitable effect of such a measure would be, "to throw two millions of acres of the most ancient land in England out of cultivation, and that the consequence must necessarily be to throw the 500,000 or 800,000 persons dependent upon their cultivation out of employment, stopping the whole machine of State, and reducing these unfortunate people to pauperism, to beggary, to destitution, and despair." (Renewed cries of "Divide, divide," "Order, order." The impatience manifested by the House was such, that it was quite impossible to glean even the gist of a sentence.) I wish to ask her Majesty's Ministers, if such fatal and sad consequences as these are to arise out of the very measures which they are pretending to bring forward as an alleviation of the sufferings of the poor, how they reconcile these antagonist doctrines? If you, the Ministers, honestly wish to afford relief to the labouring classes, why instead of taking off the protecting duties on British agriculture and British industry of every description—why, instead of removing the Customs' duties, none of them prohibitory, scarcely any of them exceeding 30 per cent. *ad valorem* on those articles which come into competition with the industry of Englishmen, of Scotchmen, and of Irishmen, whether engaged in agriculture, in manufactures, or in handicrafts—why, instead of remitting the customs' duties upon the produce and manufactures of those countries who maintain against you the most stringent and prohibitory tariffs, do you not apply yourselves to the reduction of other customs' duties on articles that do not come into competition with domestic industry, but are not less than corn, or than timber, or than silk manufactures, articles not only of luxury, but almost of absolute necessity to the poor? (Loud cheers.) Take for example sugar or rice, or above all, tea; tea has become almost as great a necessary of life, especially to the female portion of the working classes, as

bread itself; and how does the matter stand as regards tea? Tea would come into competition with no article of domestic produce, or domestic industry. The introduction of cheap tea would injure no one, and benefit all. The tax on tea is not some 25 or 30 per cent. upon the value, as are those on corn, on timber, on silk manufactures, and other articles, but actually 250 per cent. upon the cost of the tea. The cost price of the tea is only 10d. per lb., the tax you put upon it is 2s. 2½d. per lb.—that is 250 per cent. on the produce of China; 250 per cent. on the produce of the Chinese, who take all your manufactures, charging you not prohibitory duties, not extortionate duties, as you are charged in Prussia, in Russia, in Germany, in France, and in the United States, whose produce and manufactures you are going to admit free of duty, or at almost nominal duties; but charging you a duty not exceeding 6½ per cent. *ad valorem*, upon your manufactures. Take, for example, a consignment of grey woollen cloth, say the merchant's transaction shall be one of 20*l.*, viz. forty pieces of grey cloth, measuring 20 yards the piece, at 6d. per yard, or 10s. per piece, the Chinese charge you with a duty of 15 cents. or 7½d. a piece on these grey cloth goods; the Chinese duty will be exactly 1*l.* 5s. The Chinaman pays your merchant back with 480lbs. of tea, which, at 10d. per lb. comes exactly to 20*l.*, the valuation of the 40 pieces; but your duty at 26½d. a lb. comes to the enormous sum of 52*l.* 10s. on an article of exactly the same value with that on which the more liberal Chinese only charge you 1*l.* 5s. Sir, I am at a total loss to discover any principle in this, unless it is a fixed principle with her Majesty's Ministers to deal with nations as they deal with parties in this House and in the country, the principle of cringing to their enemies, and of maltreating and bullying their best, their truest, and their staunchest friends. (Great cheering from the Noble Lord's Friends.) But there is yet another consideration,—the Americans are your rivals with their manufactures in the markets of China; the Americans, wiser than you, admit the tea of their good and liberal customers in China free of duty. Take care with the ill-advised, ill-assorted, ill-conditional policy you are now pursuing, you do not alienate from yourselves, and transfer to the United States the goodwill of the Chinese and their Government, and lose a market that numbers three hundred millions of people. (Loud cheering.) Sir, one more word before I have done. We have heard in the course of these discussions a good deal about “a limited Monarchy—a reformed House of Commons—and a PROUD ARISTOCRACY.” Sir, with regard to our limited Monarchy, I have no observation to make; but, Sir, if so humble an individual as myself might be permitted to whisper a word in the ear of that illustrious and royal personage, who, as he stands nearest, so is he justly dearest, to her who sits upon the throne, I would take leave to say, that I cannot but think he listened to ill advice, when, on the first night of this great discussion he allowed himself to be seduced by the First Minister of the Crown, to come down to this House to usher in, to give *éclat*, and, as it were, by reflection from the Queen, to give the semblance of the personal sanction of her who wears the Crown to a measure which, be it for good or for evil, a great majority at least of the landed aristocracy of England, of Scotland, and of Ireland imagine will be fraught with deep

injury, if not ruin, to them—a measure which, not confined to this great class, is calculated to grind down countless smaller interests engaged in the domestic trades and industry of this empire, transferring the profits of all these interests—English, Scotch, Irish, and colonial—great and small alike, from Englishmen, from Scotchmen, and from Irishmen, to Americans, to Frenchmen, to Russians, to Poles, to Prussians, and to Germans. (Great cheering from the Protectionists, mixed with loud cries of “Oh, oh,” and interruptions from the Free-traders.) Sir, I come now to the Reformed House of Commons, and as one who was a party to that great measure, I cannot but feel a deep interest in its success, and more especially in that portion of it commonly called the Chandos clause, but originating, I believe, with my Hon. and Gallant Friend the Member for Lincoln, which extended the franchise to the largest and most respectable body in this kingdom—I mean the landed tenantry of England—and deeply should I regret should any large proportion of those Members who have been sent to Parliament to represent them in this House, prove to be the men to bring lasting dishonour alike upon themselves, their constituencies, and this House, by an act of tergiversation so gross as to be altogether unprecedented in the annals of any reformed or un-reformed House of Commons. (Great cheering from the Noble Lord’s Friends, mingled with loud cries of “Oh,” and great interruption.) Sir, lastly, I come to the “PROUD ARISTOCRACY.” We are a “proud aristocracy;” but if we are proud, we are proud only in the chastity of our honour; and if we assisted in 1841, in turning the Whigs out of office, for that we did not consider a fixed duty of 8s. a quarter on foreign corn a sufficient protection, we did so with honesty of purpose and pure single-mindedness; and as we were not before, we will not be accomplices after the fact, in the fraud by which the Whig Ministers were turned out of office; if we are a proud aristocracy we are proud of our honour, inasmuch as we never have, and never can, be guilty of double dealing with the farmers of England—swindling our opponents—deceiving our friends, or betraying our constituents. (Immense cheering, amid which the Noble Lord sat down.) The cheering was thereupon renewed, and continued for some minutes. There was a short pause, and one or two Members shouted “Palmerston,” but the Noble Lord did not rise, and the Speaker ordered strangers to withdraw, after which

The House divided, when there appeared—

For going into committee	337
Against	240
Majority for Ministers.....	— 97

The announcement of the numbers was received with cheers by the Free-traders, and also with loud cheers from the Protectionists, the Ministers having, up to the very moment of the division, confidently and notoriously vaunted that they would have a majority of 104!